DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 251 856 CS 208 712

TITLE English Language Arts Skills and Instruction: Abstracts of Doctoral Dissertations Published in "Dissertation Abstracts International," July through December 1984 (Vol. 45 Nos. 1 through 6).

INSTITUTION ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills, Urbana, Ill.

PUB DATE 84

NOTE 9p.; Pages may be marginally legible.

PUB TYPE Reference Materials - Bibliographies (131)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.

DESCRIPTORS Academic Achievement; Annotated Bibliographies; Doctoral Dissertations; *Educational Research; Elementary Secondary Education; English Instruction; Language Arts; *Listening Comprehension; *Reading Comprehension; *Spelling; *Spelling Instruction; *Vocabulary Development; Writing Skills

IDENTIFIERS Invented Spelling

ABSTRACT

This collection of abstracts is part of a continuing series providing information on recent doctoral dissertations. The 12 titles deal with the following topics: (1) the effectiveness of a linguistically based and a nonlinguistically based spelling program on the spelling competency of elementary pupils; (2) the effectiveness of spelling activities on first and second grade students' spelling achievement; (3) the relationship between teaching behaviors and student achievement in learning to write essays about poetry; (4) the effect and value of letter names-as-phonics on the invented spelling ability of beginning first grade children; (5) the effects of a games approach for spelling instruction; (6) the effect of listening-reading transfer training on the listening and reading comprehension of fourth grade students; (7) the acquisition of word meaning from context by children of high and low vocabulary ability; (8) language arts in American middle schools from 1980 to 1983; (9) the effects of visual art experiences on spelling, reading, mathematical, and visual motor skills at the primary level; (10) the effects of differing vocabulary presentations on word meaning acquisition and reading comprehension; (11) spelling as a task-dependent ability; and (12) written spelling among students in grades four, eight, and twelve. (HOD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

ED251856

English Language Arts Skills and Instruction:

Abstracts of Doctoral Dissertations Published in Dissertation Abstracts International, July through December 1984 (Vol. 45 Nos. 1 through 6).

Compiled by the Staff
of the
ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

UMI

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

CS 208 712

The dissertation titles contained here are published with permission of the University Microfilms International, publishers of Dissertation Abstracts International (copyright © 1984 by University Microfilms International) and may not be reproduced without their proper permission.

This bibliography has been compiled as part of a continuing series designed to make information on relevant dissertations available to users of the ERIC system. Monthly issues of Dissertation Abstracts International are reviewed in order to compile abstracts of dissertations on related topics, which thus become accessible in searches of the ERIC data base. Ordering information for dissertations themselves is included at the end of the bibliography.

Abstracts of the following dissertations are included in this collection:

Berger, Mitchell Ian
A COMPARISON OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF A LINGUISTICALLY-BASED AND A NONLINGUISTICALLY-BASED SPELLING PROGRAM ON THE SPELLING COMPETENCY OF ELEMENTARY PUPILS IN THE PHILADELPHIA PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

Ersek, Allen Joseph
THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SPELLING ACTIVITIES ON FIRST AND SECOND GRADE STUDENTS' SPELLING ACHIEVEMENT

Gaines, Bette Cronin
AN ANALYSIS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHING BEHAVIORS AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT IN LEARNING TO WRITE ESSAYS ABOUT POETRY

Gill, Dianne Stevenson
THE EFFECT AND VALUE OF LETTER NAMES-AS-PHONICS ON THE INVENTED SPELLING ABILITY OF BEGINNING FIRST GRADE CHILDREN

Homenick, Michael P.
SPELLING: A COMPLEX, TASK-DEPENDENT ABILITY

Keen, John Ellis
A STUDY OF THE EFFECTS OF A GAMES APPROACH FOR SPELLING INSTRUCTION

Keim, A. Virginia
THE EFFECT OF LISTENING-READING TRANSFER TRAINING ON THE LISTENING AND READING COMPREHENSION OF FOURTH GRADE STUDENTS

Loveless, Ann
A STUDY OF WRITTEN SPELLING AMONG STUDENTS IN GRADES FOUR, EIGHT, AND TWELVE UTILIZING THE 900 WORDS OF THE READING-SPELLING VOCABULARY PROGRAM

McKeown, Margaret Gentile
THE ACQUISITION OF WORD MEANING FROM CONTEXT BY CHILDREN OF HIGH AND LOW VOCABULARY ABILITY

Schulte, Larry L.
THE EFFECTS OF VISUAL ART EXPERIENCES ON SPELLING, READING, MATHEMATICAL, AND VISUAL MOTOR SKILLS AT THE PRIMARY LEVEL

Steele, Cheryl A.
LANGUAGE ARTS IN AMERICAN MIDDLE SCHOOLS 1980-83: AN ANALYSIS AND ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Weiss, Arlene Soffer
EFFECTS OF DIFFERING VOCABULARY PRESENTATIONS ON WORD MEANING ACQUISITION AND READING COMPREHENSION

A COMPARISON OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF A LINGUISTICALLY-BASED AND A NONLINGUISTICALLY-BASED SPELLING PROGRAM ON THE SPELLING COMPETENCY OF ELEMENTARY PUPILS IN THE PHILADELPHIA PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

Order No. DA8419849

BERGER, MITCHELL IAN, ED.D. *Temple University*, 1984. 119pp.

This study was designed to evaluate the effectiveness of a linguistically-based and nonlinguistically-based spelling program on the spelling competence of second- and sixth-grade pupils in the School District of Philadelphia. Using a measuring instrument developed to monitor and supervise the spelling programs, the researcher found statistically nonsignificant differences between methods on the dependent variables at the second-grade level. Statistically significant differences at the sixth-grade level on the dependent variables favoring the memorization method were reported. One implication from the study was that sixth-grade pupils may profit from memorizing utilitarian spelling words. Another implication was that spelling methodology may not be crucial at the second-grade level.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SPELLING ACTIVITIES ON FIRST AND SECOND GRADE STUDENTS' SPELLING ACHIEVEMENT

Order No. DA8410138

ERSEK, ALLEN JOSEPH, ED.D. *Temple University*, 1984. 160pp. Major Adviser: Dr. Duane Sackett

Research for the past fifty years has provided specific methods and techniques for spelling instruction but much of it has not been implemented in the classroom.

The purpose of the study was to ascertain whether students instructed in spelling activities would score higher on tests of spelling achievement than students who were not instructed in the spelling activities.

The study took place in the Ridley School District, a community near Philadelphia, Pennsylvania with an enrollment of 3,183 students.

Eight first and second grade classes with a total enrollment of 162 students were used in this study. There were eighty one students in each group. The duration of the study was twelve weeks.

The research sought to determine whether students receiving supplemental spelling activities instruction would have significantly greater gains in spelling achievement than students who did not receive the supplemental spelling activities instruction. The questions were converted to four null hypotheses to determine if there was any significant difference between the two groups in long range spelling achievement, short range spelling achievement or sex.

A corollary study also measured the contributions of the variables: pretest, grade, group membership, and sex to the total variance in posttest achievement scores.

The results indicated there was no significant difference in spelling achievement as measured on a long range retention test between students who received instruction in supplemental spelling activities and those students who did not receive this instruction. The short range results revealed that in first grade, weeks two through eight and eleven favored the supplemental activities group at the .05 level of confidence. In second grade, week eleven favored the activities group significantly but weeks seven and eight favored the group which did not receive the supplemental activities. There was no significant difference in spelling achievement within the groups between the male and female students.

The results of the corollary study indicated that the variables pretest and grade level had a significant effect on the posttest scores but the effect of the variables group membership and sex were not significant.

AN ANALYSIS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHING BEHAVIORS AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT IN LEARNING TO WRITE ESSAYS ABOUT POETRY

Order No. DA8410712

GAINES, BETTE CRONIN, PH.D. *Syracuse University*, 1983. 267pp.

The study investigated the relationship between student achievement in learning to write essays about poems during the literature-poetry component of the Syracuse University freshman composition course.

The sample included 662 students in thirty-nine classes taught by thirty-five adjunct instructors. The unit of analysis was the class. Achievement was measured by evaluations on a seven-category scale of in-class essays written at the beginning and end of the unit. Essays required the analysis and interpretation of two short poems. Eighteen independent raters evaluated essays, and total scores on individual papers were used to establish class means which were then converted to regressed gain scores for use in subsequent analyses.

Analyses of correlation compared achievement to social and behavioral characteristics of the class and instructor, respectively, as reported by students on the Classroom Behavior Survey (Kelly & Chapman), and the Learning Environment Inventory (Walberg & Anderson), student precourse attitude, class size, and self-reported GPA. Multiple regression was used to analyze the effects of combinations of factors and two- and three-way cross-product interactions.

Achievement was positive affected by goal direction and teacher communication, and significant negative effects were related to democratic procedure and friction among students. No significant unique contribution could be established for interactions. The four main effects factors accounted for forty-seven percent of the difference in achievement.

The study confirms the effect of instructional and environmental factors on student learning, but it did not find a significant added contribution of interactions among these factors.

THE EFFECT AND VALUE OF LETTER NAMES-AS-PHONICS ON THE INVENTED SPELLING ABILITY OF BEGINNING FIRST GRADE CHILDREN

Order No. DA8406748

GILL, DIANNE STEVENSON, ED.D. *Boston University*, 1984. 176pp. Major Professor: Dr. J. Richard Chambers

The major concerns of this study were twofold: (1) the way in which letter-names act as a type of phonics and (2) the transfer that takes place between knowledge of letter-names and invented spelling when the letter-name is in the word.

The subjects consisted of seventy-three beginning first grade students from four classrooms in one rural New England school. To obtain data to answer the research questions the following three tests, developed by Murphy and Durrell, were administered in the first two weeks of the academic year: (1) Prereading Phonics Inventory; (2) Tests of Words Identified by Spelling; (3) Test of Invented Spelling. The data were processed by computer to obtain frequency distributions, to determine central tendency and variability of test results, correlation coefficients, and to perform analysis of variance. Further, the author reported examples of invented spelling as demonstrated by each third of the sample on a total test of phonemic knowledge.

It was found that total phonemic knowledge strongly relates to the ability to identify words by hearing them spelled and to invented spelling. The interrelationships among specific aspects of phonemic knowledge are significantly related to the following: (1) identifying words by hearing them spelled; (2) invented spelling; (3) total phonemic knowledge. The ability to identify phonemes in spoken words was the specific aspect of phonemic knowledge which related most highly with other aspects of phonemic knowledge and total phonemic knowledges, identifying words by hearing them spelled, and invented spelling. From 86%-100% of the population could identify the alphabet letters and 21%-87% could both identify and spell the letters one or more times. The 13% who were unable to identify letters, spelled the letters 0-100% of the time. Students consistently scored in the same third on each of the three tests administered.

The author concluded that it appeared that letter-name knowledge acted as a type of phonics and transferred to invented spelling when the letter-name was in the word.

SPELLING: A COMPLEX, TASK-DEPENDENT ABILITY

Order No. DA8414612

HOMENICK, MICHAEL P., PH.D. *State University of New York at Albany*, 1984. 158pp.

Most research in spelling has been based on a conceptualization of spelling as a simple, task-dependent ability. Research based on this conceptualization has failed to provide a basis for theory development. Over the past decade, however, evidence has been accumulating that supports an alternate conceptualization: spelling is a complex, task-dependent ability.

In this study the underlying complexity and task dependence of spelling ability, as well as the development of individual knowledge, perceptions, and strategies thought to reflect the development of a meta-awareness of spelling ability were investigated. Three methods of measuring spelling ability, viz., dictation, recognition, and spelling in writing, were used with sixth and ninth graders. Comparability of performance among the three methods was examined directly, and in relation to cognitive ability, complexity in writing, and perceptions of spelling ability and strategies for spelling adopted by individuals.

The results showed that there were differences between measures in which vocabulary was controlled and in which the individual is free to set vocabulary. These differences appeared to be related to differences in word knowledge. Based on factor analyses of the data, a two-factor solution emerged. The spelling measures loaded on a separate factor. The dictation and recognition measures, however, also loaded on a verbal-academic factor, whereas the spelling in writing measure did not.

The results also showed that, as measured in this study, there was no relationship between spelling ability and complexity in writing. In general, sixth and ninth graders did not appear to modify the complexity of their writing to compensate for poor spelling ability.

In general, pupils were accurate in assessing their spelling ability as measured by standardized tests. Although not consistent, there were minor differences in regard to strategy usage between good and poor spellers and between sixth and ninth graders. Good spellers showed a tendency to use fewer strategies and to study less than poor spellers. Ninth graders showed somewhat more and slightly different strategy usage.

A STUDY OF THE EFFECTS OF A GAMES APPROACH FOR SPELLING INSTRUCTION

Order No. DA8409694

KEEN, JOHN ELLIS, ED.D. *Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University*, 1983. 135pp.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of "game-playing" on the spelling performance of selected third through fifth grade elementary students. This study examined differences in the spelling achievement of students using a game approach for instruction in spelling versus an equivalent group of students following a typical textbook format.

The design included pre and post analysis of SRA achievement tests, word fluency scores and Friday final test results for an eleven week period. Analysis through gain scores provided data for comparison purposes. A final word count was analyzed for the game approach to examine morphological and phonological similarities and grade level word production. Included also was a game vs. textbook word count per group, per child for the duration of the study.

Significant differences were found favoring the third grade textbook group only in pre and post, Friday final test and word fluency measures. Final word count analysis for the game group evidenced markedly increasing quantitative and qualitative correct spelling across grade levels. The game groups' words were dramatically extended in numbers and phonological-morphological similarity. Comparative word counts for both groups indicated a significant advantage in terms of opportunity to spell in favor of the game group.

This study leads to the general conclusion that an initial formal exposure to spelling skills is necessary. Beyond initial formal introduction of spelling the textbook approach is no more or less effective. Final word counts across grade levels for the game groups and comparison of word counts for both groups suggest the game approach as superior over time.

Recommendations include alternative research designs such as other or combinations of games, alternative/increased measurement instruments and longitudinal evaluations. Cognitive and affective recommendations include less strict adherence to textbooks, increased supplementary activities to expand spelling vocabulary/generalizations, evaluation of spelling in other content areas, use and modifications of commercial or teacher made games and a reduction in competition.

THE EFFECT OF LISTENING-READING TRANSFER TRAINING ON THE LISTENING AND READING COMPREHENSION OF FOURTH GRADE STUDENTS

Order No. DA8418419

KEIM, A. VIRGINIA, ED.D. *Lehigh University*, 1984. 113pp.

The purpose of the study was to investigate the effectiveness of listening-reading transfer training as a means for improving the listening and reading comprehension of fourth grade students. A total of 90 fourth graders from a northeastern Pennsylvania school district participated in the 14 week study. Subjects worked in one of two groups: transfer training (the experimental group, N = 44) or silent reading (the control group, N = 46). All subjects were reading at or above grade level; there were no uncorrected visual or hearing problems in this sample.

Procedures and Materials. Prior to the onset of training, subjects were pretested in listening and reading comprehension using the Sequential Tests of Educational Progress III, 1979 Edition. Randomization was then used to assign subjects to one of two groups. Training was given to the experimental group three times a week. Each training session presented two different passages: the first was listened to and the second was read silently by the students. Both passages had the same pre-listening/reading purpose and varied in length from 50 to 450 words. Selections and comprehension questions were adapted from fourth grade basal readers. After each passage was listened to or read, the subjects were presented with oral or written questions, respectively. Listening/reading purposes included literal main idea, recall of specific details, vocabulary in context, and drawing conclusions. There were 40 lessons in all with 10 each for the above purposes. Control subjects did not receive any listening-reading transfer training but practiced sustained silent reading for an equal amount of time. Upon completion of the program, experimental and control subjects were posttested in listening and reading comprehension using appropriate levels of the pretests.

Findings. Analyses of covariance (ANCOVA's) were conducted for listening and reading. The .05 level was used to determine significance. The first ANCOVA showed that the experimental group improved in listening comprehension, while the second ANCOVA found no significant improvement in reading comprehension for either group. Therefore, while transfer training was effective in improving listening comprehension, it did not have a similar effect on reading comprehension for this sample.

A STUDY OF WRITTEN SPELLING AMONG STUDENTS IN GRADES FOUR, EIGHT, AND TWELVE UTILIZING THE 900 WORDS OF THE READING-SPELLING VOCABULARY PROGRAM

Order No. DA8418077

LOVELESS, ANN, ED.D. *University of Houston*, 1984. 213pp.

Problem and Purpose. In 1978 Stetson developed the Reading-Spelling Vocabulary Program, a list of 900 high frequency words claimed to be important for both reading and spelling. Although the words have been rank ordered for reading difficulty (Stetson, 1980; White, 1980), no research has been conducted to rank order the word list for written spelling or to compare order of difficulty between spelling and reading. Therefore, this study was designed to answer two questions: (1) Are there differences in rank order of difficulty for the 900 words between written spelling and reading? (2) Are there

differences in the spelling accuracy of selected words written for students in 1983 (Loveless) and 1954 (Greene)?

Design. The 900 words of the RSVP were randomly assigned to nine word lists of 100 words each. The word lists were then administered as spelling dictation tests to 4,961 students in grades two through twelve. Each student wrote the words of one test; therefore, each of the 900 words was attempted approximately 50 times at each grade level. The test protocols were individually scored by the principal investigator, and item difficulties were calculated for every word at each grade level. The data for grades two, four, eight, and twelve were then used to answer the two questions of the study.

Results and Conclusions. There were no significant differences in rank orders of difficulty between written spelling and reading, suggesting that high frequency word lists can be rank ordered for either reading or spelling with similar results. Students in the second grade spelled the words significantly better than students did in 1954, fourth graders spelled the words slightly better, and eighth graders spelled at the same level as students in 1954.

Since the 1954 Greene study is the one used by the majority of publishers to assign words to particular grade levels and since there is evidence that students' spelling competence has changed significantly during the last 30 years, a major re-evaluation of word difficulty should be conducted, perhaps on a national scale.

THE ACQUISITION OF WORD MEANING FROM CONTEXT BY CHILDREN OF HIGH AND LOW VOCABULARY ABILITY

Order No. DA8411728

McKeown, Margaret Gentile, Ph.D. *University of Pittsburgh*, 1983. 147pp.

This study investigated differences in the process of acquiring word meaning from context in high and low ability children. Fifteen high and fifteen low ability fifth-graders were given a task that presented a word meaning-acquisition sequence representing seven aspects of the meaning-acquisition process. The task required: (1) selection of concepts from context that would constrain the meaning of an unknown word within the context; (2) testing possible word meanings to see if they fit the constraints; (3) selection of constraints from two contexts presented simultaneously; (4) testing possible word meanings using constraints from both contexts; (5) compiling and refining word meaning information from additional contexts; (6) identifying the meaning of the unknown word; (7) identifying appropriate uses of the newly learned word. A significant difference in favor of the high group was found for six of the aspects, all but testing constraints from two contexts. Qualitative comparisons revealed differences in the types of errors made by each group, and differential difficulty within task aspects.

Findings are discussed in terms of characteristics of processing derived from differences between successful and less successful meaning acquisition. One characteristic of a less successful process was a lack of understanding of the relationship between a word and the surrounding context, evidenced by use of irrelevant outside information to constrain the meaning of an unknown word. Another such characteristic was an incomplete use of available information to evaluate a context or a possible word meaning. A third characteristic was that when two contexts were used to derive word meaning information, they sometimes interfered with each other, causing incorrect information to be inferred.

Implications for instruction centered on the use of a teacher-modeling technique to guide children to use context effectively to acquire word meaning.

THE EFFECTS OF VISUAL ART EXPERIENCES ON SPELLING, READING, MATHEMATICAL, AND VISUAL MOTOR SKILLS AT THE PRIMARY LEVEL

Order No. DA8403620

Schulte, Larry L., Ph.D. *University of Kansas*, 1983. 91pp.

This dissertation deals with the effects of 14 visual art experiences on spelling, reading, mathematical, and visual motor skills at the kindergarten, first-grade, and second-grade levels.

This study is an empirical study, using an experimental group/control group pretest-posttest structure. The *Wide Range Achievement Test* was used for measuring spelling, reading, and mathematical skills; and the *Developmental Test of Visual Motor Integration* was used for measuring visual motor skills.

The results showed a statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups in visual motor skills at the second-grade level. The visual motor skills at the second-grade level and gender showed a statistically significant interaction effect. None of the other effects was statistically significant at the .05 level.

LANGUAGE ARTS IN AMERICAN MIDDLE SCHOOLS 1980-83: AN ANALYSIS AND ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Order No. DA8413986

Steele, Cheryl A., Ph.D. *The University of Oklahoma*, 1984. 168pp. Major Professor: Charlyce King

A systematic analysis of articles and documents published for middle school language arts teachers during the years 1980-1983 was conducted in order to determine to what extent the following research questions were being addressed in those publications: (1) What was included within the language arts curriculum for American Middle School students at that time? (2) What innovative programs, teaching approaches and techniques were being used within the language arts curriculum for American Middle Schools? (3) What research had been reported that may have affected the teaching/learning of language arts in American Middle Schools?

Analyses of the data revealed a definite emphasis on basic skills in language arts as well as an effort to expand the scope of the language arts to meet specific transescent needs. Innovative programs and teaching approaches attempted to implement the basic skills approach in new and measurable ways and also create a desire in students for learning. Research on the cognitive development of transescents was identified as a major influence on curricula, teaching programs, methods, and materials. Special students, especially those identified as "gifted," received attention in the form of specific units of study designed to provide enriching and challenging experiences. Curricular materials and suggestions were pragmatic--with emphasis on basic skills and creative ways to meet transescent needs.

It was noted that many of the items of interest to middle school language arts educators were presented and published in sources not readily available for these teachers.

As a result of these analyses, an annotated bibliography of sources of information of particular interest to middle school language arts teachers was created and appendixed to the dissertation to provide an easily accessible guide to these articles and documents.

EFFECTS OF DIFFERING VOCABULARY PRESENTATIONS ON WORD MEANING ACQUISITION AND READING COMPREHENSION Order No. DA8416324

WEISS, ARLENE SOFFER, PH.D. *University of Miami*, 1984. 99pp.
Supervisor: Professor Charles T. Mangrum II

A study was conducted to investigate if two differing vocabulary presentations had differential effects on various vocabulary and text comprehension measures. Thirty-seven college students with below average verbal ability were either assigned to a group presented 25 pseudowords with definitions, a group presented the same pseudowords and definitions plus adjoining context, or a control group. Subsequently, all groups read a stimulus passage containing the pseudowords. On two vocabulary measures both treatment groups outperformed the control group, while their means did not differ. Scores on a delayed vocabulary measure indicated that the control group failed to deduce any pseudoword meanings from the context of the stimulus passage. Vocabulary training improved text comprehension, with a multiple-choice test and a retell measure being primarily sensitive to the definition presentation and secondarily sensitive to the definition plus context presentation. A cloze test was primarily sensitive to the definition plus context presentation, with the definition group performing no better than the control group on this measure. Since studying pseudowords in context rather than learning their meanings improved cloze performance, doubt is cast on cloze as a measure of reading comprehension.

Copies of the Dissertations may be obtained by addressing your request to:

University Microfilms International
Dissertation Copies
Post Office Box 1764
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106

or by telephoning (toll-free) 1-800-521-3042